



MAURITIUS

# Economic Indicators

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1. Roads and Road Transport.
2. Road Transport Statistics, 1985.
3. Public Sector - Wages, Salaries and Transfer Payments,
4. Consumer Price Index - 2nd Quarter 1986.

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MAURITIUS

## I. ROADS AND ROAD TRANSPORT

In Mauritius where internal communication is entirely dominated by vehicle traffic, roads and road transport are an essential part of commercial and social life. They have assumed particular significance in recent years as a result of the Government's drive for economic diversification which lays emphasis on the development of manufacturing and tourism to stimulate sustained economic growth and to raise employment levels. The rise in population has also added to the pressure. Government's policy for the road sector has therefore been shaped by the need for improving and consolidating the existing road network while minimizing the risks of accidents and adverse economic consequences arising from a strained road transport system.

### Road Network

2. Mauritian roads are classified into four categories: motorways, main roads, urban roads and rural roads. Table I shows evolution of the road network over the period 1981-85.

Table I: Road Networks, 1981-85

Year	In Kilometre					% of Roads Paved	Road Density per sq km
	Motorways	Main Roads	Urban Roads	Rural Roads	Total		
1981	21.6	837	578	345	1,781.6	92	0.95
1982	27.0	837	578	339	1,781.0	92	0.95
1983	27.0	838	577	339	1,781.0	92	0.95
1984	27.0	838	577	339	1,781.0	92	0.95
1985	27.0	840	577	339	1,783.0	92	0.96

3. The total extent of the country's road network increased only slightly, from 1,782 km in 1981 to 1,783 km in 1985. There were noticeable changes in the length of the main roads (+3 km) and the rural roads (-6 km) over this period. The decline observed in the latter group of roads was accounted for by the construction of the Terre Rouge - Pamplémousses dual carriageway on the site of previous rural tracks. The road density at 0.96 km per km<sup>2</sup> is the highest in the eastern and southern Africa region and compares favourably with other countries of Africa.

Investment in the Road Sector

4. In spite of the not-too spectacular growth in the total road network, Capital Expenditure in the sector was impressive. Table II gives Government's road investment over the period 1980-85. The figures relating to investment and road maintenance refer to expenditures incurred by the Ministry of Works. They do not include expenditures met by the Development Works Corporation and the local authorities.

<u>Road</u>	<u>Total Cost (actual)</u> Rs million
(a) Post Cyclone Road Rehabilitation	54.4
(b) Resurfacing of Main Roads	13.9
(c) Resurfacing of the Port Louis - Phoenix Dual Carriageway	11.0
(d) Relief Road to the North	70.0
(e) New Grand River North West Bridge	28.0
	<hr/>
All Roads	177.3

5. Total public sector capital expenditure in five years to 1985 reached Rs 177 million. Expenditure in new projects - Relief Road to the North and New Grand River North West Bridge - amounted to Rs 98 million; rehabilitation and resurfacing of the existing roads, which were damaged in the floods of December 1979 and January 1980, absorbed another Rs 79 million. The investment has helped improve road conditions and reduce turn-around times for commercial vehicles. The most significant impact has been on traffic at Grand River North West where the opening of a new bridge late last year has greatly facilitated the flow of vehicles in the directions of Beau Bassin and Port Louis.

6. In the short-term, the road sector will continue to absorb a significant proportion of public sector investment, largely as a result of the three major projects (Table III) which are currently under implementation. Increased spending on roads is also in line with the Government's policy which aims at channelling resources to productive sectors and to infrastructure development that will help industrial and tourism growth.

Table III: On-going Road Projects

<u>Project</u>	<u>Estimated Costs</u> (Rs million)	<u>Length</u> (in km)
Phoenix-La Vigie-Nouvelle France	127.0	16.70
Port Louis Through Road	55.5	1.70
World Bank Financed Road Rehabilitation Project	<u>180.0</u>	<u>75.19</u>
All projects	<u>362.5</u>	<u>93.59</u>

7. Together, the three projects will require a total funding of some Rs 363 million over the next two to three years. Two out of the three road projects, namely the Phoenix-La Vigie-Nouvelle France and the Port-Louis Through Road, are new projects. They will add 18.4 km to the 100 existing motorways. The World Bank is also financing a road rehabilitation project designed to upgrade 75 km of the main roads in the country.

Road Maintenance

8. Road maintenance is a regular feature as opposed to massive rehabilitation and resurfacing works that need to be undertaken on average every eight to ten years for principal roads in Mauritius. Outlay on this item jumped from Rs 33 million in Financial Year 1983 to Rs 44 million in Financial Year 1985 (Table IV). Almost two-thirds of the increase was due to materials whose share in the total maintenance budget rose from less than a quarter to a third in the same period.

Table IV: Road Maintenance Budget FY 1983-85

	<u>1983/84</u>	<u>1984/85</u> (Estimates)	<u>Rs million</u> <u>1985/86</u> (Estimates)
<u>Materials</u>	7.31	7.96	15.00
<u>Administration/Labor</u>	25.43	27.91	28.50
<u>Repair of Equipment and Vehicles</u>	0.52	0.55	0.56
Total	<u>33.26</u>	<u>36.42</u>	<u>44.06</u>

Motor Vehicle Fleet

9. Table V provides an indication of the evolution in the motor vehicle fleet over the period 1980-84. As shown in the table, there was a steady rise in the size of the vehicle fleet. Significant increases were recorded in the fleet of the two-wheeled vehicles as well as in passenger cars and other dual purpose vehicles. These increases could be accounted for by the improved economic situation.

10. The motor vehicle fleet is dominated by auto cycles and motor cycles (36%) and passenger cars (32%). The respective shares of trucks and lorries, vans, taxis and buses are 6%, 4%, 4%, and 2%.

11. The Mauritian motor vehicle fleet which consisted of 74,369 vehicles in 1984 is one of the largest in Africa with one vehicle for every 13 inhabitants. The recent Government decision to reduce import duties on new vehicles and to lift restrictions on the importation of second-hand cars is expected to raise the total rolling stock in the country, thus further improving the vehicle/population ratio.

Table V: Motor Vehicle Fleet 1/

<u>Year 2/</u>	<u>Auto-cycles and Motor-cycles</u>	<u>Passenger Cars</u>	<u>Taxi Cars</u>	<u>Vans</u>	<u>Buses</u>	<u>Lorries and Trucks</u>	<u>Dual Purpose Vehicles</u>	<u>Other 3/ Vehicles</u>	<u>Total</u>
1980	26,297	22,335	33,305	2,656	1,490	4,521	6,167	3,058	69,829
1981	26,107	22,064	3,151	2,804	1,469	4,592	6,494	3,166	69,847
1982	27,045	22,510	3,026	2,955	1,442	4,645	6,709	3,408	71,750
1983	27,481	23,128	2,954	3,089	1,418	4,690	6,971	3,487	73,218
1984	28,105	23,539	2,735	3,265	1,364	4,671	7,212	3,478	74,369

1/ Privately-owned vehicles of which about 37% were commercial vehicles in 1984; in addition, there are about 2,700 government-owned vehicles.

2/ End of year.

3/ Include tractors, ambulances, fire service vehicles, excavators, dumpers, heavy motor-cars, prime movers, trailers, tanker lorries and road rollers.

Road Traffic Accidents

12. Improvements in road conditions, the imposition of speed limits on some major roads, better traffic management as well as the education of road users have cut deeply into the number of <sup>reported</sup> road accidents; these declined from 5753 in 1980 to 4681 in 1984 (Table VI). The substantial growth in casualties (from 2,068 to 2,329) and in the number of seriously injured, which doubled in only four years, is definitely a cause for concern. However, an encouraging trend has been noticed in the reduction of those fatally wounded.

Table VI: Road Traffic Accidents and Casualties, 1980-84

	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u>
<b>A. <u>Road Traffic Accidents</u></b>					
(i) No. of Accidents	<u>5,753</u>	<u>5,281</u>	<u>4,749</u>	<u>4,593</u>	<u>4,681</u>
(ii) No. of Accidents per 100,000 of population	621	562	500	480	479
<b>B. <u>Motor Vehicle Accidents</u></b>					
(i) No. of Motor Vehicles Involved	<u>8,965</u>	<u>8,241</u>	<u>7,354</u>	<u>6,618</u>	<u>7,538</u>
(ii) No. per 100,000 of population	968	877	774	691	709
(iii) No. per 1,000 Registered Motor Vehicles	130	119	1104	91	102
<b>C. <u>Nature of Casualty</u></b>					
(i) Killed	124	108	99	101	82
(ii) Seriously Injured	127	269	147	181	253
(iii) Slightly Injured	1,817	2,772	2,214	2,445	1,994
<u>Total Casualties</u>	<u>2,068</u>	<u>3,149</u>	<u>2,460</u>	<u>2,727</u>	<u>2,329</u>

Passenger Transport

13. The bus industry, currently the main carrier for public passenger transport, has been the contraction of its fleet at an average annual rate of 3% in 1980-84. The reduced fleet had to be used still more intensively to cater for the growing passenger traffic. Average vehicle-miles per day thus shot up from 92.5 to 97.5 in the four-year period, indicating heavy demand on the bus fleet already in operation. A positive corollary to this was the boosting of total gross receipts from bus services which jumped from Rs 168 million to Rs 276 million from 1980 to 1984 (Table VII).



Table VII: Bus Operational Statistics <sup>1/</sup>1980-84

	<u>Unit</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u>
Total number of buses registered <sup>2/</sup> (at 30th June)	Number	1,335	1,344	1,327	1,276	1,230
Total vehicle journeys	Thousand	3,262	3,194	3,165	3,018	3,140
Average vehicle-journeys per day	"	8.9	8.8	8.7	8.3	8.6
Total vehicle-miles	"	33,842	33,663	34,999	34,539	35,581
Average vehicle-miles per day	"	92.5	92.2	95.9	94.6	97.5
Total gross receipts	'000 Rs	168,404	209,856	250,663	268,034	276,215
Average gross receipts per day	'000 Rs	460	575	687	734	755

<sup>1/</sup> Includes data on 'special' trips.

<sup>2/</sup> Figures represent only buses with a Road Service Licence.

14. The more intensive use of the existing bus fleet may have been made possible by the renewal of the bus fleet, in particular by the National Transport Corporation. As shown in Table VIII about three-quarters of buses in the fleet are less than 10 years old. In the long-term, however, fleet renewal may be necessary as some 30% are in service for more than 10 years, while another 72% are more than five-year old.

Table VIII: Age Composition of Operational Bus Fleet (public transport) 1/  
(as at 30th June), 1984 - 1985

<u>Age-group</u> (years)	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Less than 5	444	40	316	28
5 less than 10	373	34	463	42
10 less than 15	171	16	216	19
15 less than 20	106	10	119	11
Total number of buses	1,094	100	1,114	100

1/ Refers only to buses with a Road Service Licence, i.e. buses which operate on scheduled routes and charge individual fares.

#### Conclusion

15. Investments already incurred in the road sector have given the country a network which consists of 90% of bituminised roads and a road density of 0.96 per km<sup>2</sup>. In addition, a total capital spending of some Rs 363 million is planned on three major road schemes. With the completion of these projects, major investment needs of the road sector will have largely been met. For the medium-term, therefore, no substantial capital outlay is called for, except in the southern sector where the Phoenix-La Vigie-Nouvelle France segment may have to be extended to provide a direct link between Plaisance and Port Louis. Particular attention will need to be given to the improvement of the public passenger transport system.